

Ammonia Sheets

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en·u·re·sis (n): The uncontrolled or involuntary discharge of urine.

Sometimes I gross myself out. I blame it on being raised Catholic in America, and the fear and distrust of the body which inevitably results. Indeed, I find myself embarrassed to admit to being flatulent (like very other animal), and I can only belch in front of a select few people. When my girlfriend Maddy and I first moved in together, I still too embarrassed to be, well, *bodily* around her.

The odd part is that when I was growing up, I was no stranger to gross things. Of course, nobody is as a child, since part of being young is an appreciation for grossness. Biology forced me to go beyond that, however; I was a bedwetter. You wanna know about shame, especially as a child? That's the textbook example.

I'm not sure whether it was always a problem, or it was triggered by my parents breaking up when I was eight, like so many of my other childhood traumas.

I suppose I'd have to ask my mother. As you can imagine, though, I'd really rather not. If there was *anything* I could erase from my childhood, or at least peoples' memories of me as a child, that would be it. That I was born a boy is far less problematic to me than the fact that I was a boy who wet the bed until their early teens. In a way, being transsexual is more socially acceptable than being a bedwetter. Most people can't begin to fathom the notion of feeling like a different gender, so usually they make the leap of faith and move on.

The former is so alien to most people, they can almost make the leap of faith and move on. The latter, perhaps, hits too close to home. It's a fear everyone

It could be among the reasons why I never had a wet dream, even when my body started producing testosterone and I was masturbating like a fiend (see Chapter 7). No nocturnal emissions for me. Nocturnal enuresis was the best I could do. I've come to terms with a lot of things about my body, and am lacking certain phallic hang-ups common to trannies, but I will *a/ways* feel ripped off about that one.

My frequent childhood sheet-soiling isn't something I think much about these days unless triggered by the smell of ammonia. It's a very strong sense memory, like how tobacco pipes remind me of my maternal grandfather. As for ammonia, I used to sleep in it.

The thing is, my mother was mostly understanding. She knew it wasn't my fault, that I didn't *want* to do it. It was just another way that her youngest son was...well, not *troubled*, exactly, at least not in any overt way. Peculiar, certainly, and quiet. Besides, there wasn't much she could do about it.

Occasionally, though, she did get angry. The problem was that I didn't always tell her when it happened. Again, it was the whole "embarrassment" thing. I'd rather deal with the wet, smelly sheets than tell her I'd done it *again*, and usually within a few days of the last time. By the time the evening rolled around the sheets were usually dry. If they weren't, I could avoid the damp spots easily enough. It was just how things were, and it beat having to face my mom.

I don't mean to suggest that she was mean or abusive. She never hit me, at least not since the wooden spoon was retired in the pre-divorce days. But I couldn't handle her disappointment and frustration, even though I knew it would be worse if I didn't tell her right away. The great paradox of childhood. And this wasn't like breaking the window with a baseball, either.

So, I slept enveloped in the smell of bacterial breakdown of my urine. Like so many aspects of my life which appeared distasteful at best from the outside—or, more accurately, in hindsight—I accepted it has how things were. Secrets were for keeping, and for as long as possible. And it beat the alternative.



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